



FAIRMONT PARKS COMMISSION
March 1, 2017

Members present: Marianne Moran, Brad Merrifield, Patrick Snively, Corwin Russell, JR Bennett, and Neil Stalnaker

Members absent: Dora Grubb

Advisors present: Hanna Weaver and Robin Gomez

Call to Order: Hanna Weaver called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

Item 1. Approval of Minutes. No minutes to approve.

Item 2. Communications & Announcements. All commissioners went around the room and introduced themselves and City staff gave a brief introduction as well. Hanna told everyone to take a look at the bylaws when they had time to see if they had any corrections.

Brad Merrifield asked about placing a parks map on the city's website so that it was easy to see where each park is and where they are in relation to the other.

Patrick Snively asked about Make Marion County Shine and if the parks are areas that are part of the clean up. Hanna said that some are, but not all of them. Pat asked if they all could be and Hanna said that they certainly could be included a group would just need to choose those specific areas. With this, Robin mentioned the idea of allowing groups to adopt parks, similar to adopt a highway, for clean up purposes.

Brad Merrifield asked about geocaching and if that was something that could be used to entice people to visit the parks. Corwin Russell said that it could work and he would get more information.

Item 3. Parks Report. Hanna Weaver gave a brief report on all eight of the city parks. The information included projects that are already in motion for each of the parks or projects that are relatively new to each park.

Bellview: Playground equipment that was purchased with a Bowers Grant to be installed by Public Works this spring. Basketball court replacement and fill dirt problems.

Windmill: Fields are being reserved for the spring and summer and pavilions are being rented. Bathrooms will be opened soon for the season. There are proposed field usage fees to take effect in July. Playground had a “facelift” last summer by an Eagle Scout, Levi Helmick, much of his work was later vandalized.

5th Street: Basketball Court was resurfaced and had rubberized surfacing installed in 2014/15, Skip Price and Sabo Latino also donated bleachers around the same time, but were installed last spring. New fence is currently being installed around the front of the park, the back side of the park will be finished at a later date. Port-a potty to be placed at the park soon for the season.

Oliver Avenue/Fairmont Community Garden: Learning Options Inc. entered into an agreement with the City of Fairmont last spring to operate and maintain the garden. LOI would like to continue with the garden this year; the agreement will have minor changes made to allow LOI to begin season prep sooner. The garden is currently closed for the season. Dead trees are being removed by Public Works.

Connector Park/Blaine Street Park: A cement garbage can will be replaced in the coming weeks. It is being replaced due to vandalism. A port-a-potty will be placed at the park soon for the season.

Morgantown Avenue Park: Debris clean up has been taking place. East Park Elementary continues to use the park.

Norwood Park: A new fence was installed at the park last summer; it was replaced due to age and a car knocking part of it down. It is still a possibility that it could be leased to Victory Baptist Church, which is adjacent to the park.

Morris Park: The City is currently seeking quotes for a complete resurfacing/replacement of the tennis courts at the park (3 in total). The former caretakers house that was being remodeled by volunteers remains incomplete. Pavilions are being rented for the season. The bathrooms will be reopened soon for the season and the port-a-potty removed.

All parks will need new signs with the new parks logo this year. Dog waste stations were installed at all parks last summer (with the exception of Morris Park), this was in partnership with Stormwater.

Election of Officers. Hanna discussed the election of officers and asked if this was something to push to a later meeting. Everyone seemed to agree to wait since the commission has been newly reformed.

Financial Report. Hanna gave a brief Financial Report. There is \$22,201 remaining for FY17, but the money will be used for projects that are already planned, mainly the remaining 5th Street fence and the Morris Park tennis courts. Currently there is \$20,000 in the capital budget for parks for FY 18. Robin advised there will be a carry over from the general fund after FY17 closes, so there could be more added.

New Business.

Bellview Park basketball court needs resurfaced and the playground equipment needs to be placed. Hanna recommended per several conversations with Parks staff that the basketball court be relocated to the lower field and the current court be removed for the playground equipment. This is so the playground flows better and also so that the lower fields fill issues can be fixed.

JR Bennett moved that the Bellview basketball court be moved to the lower field, Marianne Moran seconded.

JR Bennett mentioned vandalism at Windmill Park and that he believes that some surveillance is needed. He also mentioned the Fairmont City Cemetery, which is adjacent to the park, and that it needs cleaned up. Hanna mentioned that volunteers had tried last summer, but did not make much progress.

Hanna brought up the lack of parking at Morris park and that there is room to put additional spaces near the pavilion and playground area.

Hanna talked about the WVU fruit tree program and someone from WVU reached out about planting fruit trees in Fairmont. Initially, they asked about planting them in all city parks, but later discovered they cannot go in parks due to bees. Hanna mentioned still trying to plant some at the Community Garden and that they are free.

Neil Stalnaker presented Hanna with several ideas of his prior to the meeting. Hanna shared those with everyone, starting with Norwood Park. Neil's idea was to make Norwood Park the handicap accessible park in the city. It has close proximity to the interstate and this would make it different from all other parks. Instead of having a few pieces of handicap accessible equipment at all parks, this would be one park with a lot of equipment. Everyone really liked this idea. Someone mentioned asking Novelis to partner since they own adjacent property.

Neil also had the idea of creating a park ranger program for children to help them feel a sense of ownership about their local neighborhood park. The city could get a mascot outfit and create "badges" that would have the child's name and parents phone number on it if they happened to get lost. He also had the idea of "fun" trashcans to get children more excited about putting garbage in a trashcan.

Hanna mentioned the Windmill Park vandalism again and mentioned that Police Chief Steve Shine mentioned it to her in a staff meeting as being a regular problem. Corwin mentioned possibly getting signs up for surveillance before any actual equipment is installed. Robin said that would be done.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:49 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15, 2017 at 6pm. Meetings will be held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, as they were before.